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[For discussion of the avunculate in the Altaic-speaking steppe societies, see 10: Krader, AH1 Mongolia, category 116, pp. 591-600.]

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Bilaterality is a symmetrical conception, unilineality an asymmetrical one; and the symmetry inherent in the filiation pattern lies at the core of the cousin question. The basic cousin terminology, that from which all systems of cousin terms may be typologically, if not chronologically, derived on the Asiatic steppe is the reciprocal parallel cousin terminology; there is a common term for children of brothers, and a common term for children of sisters. The fundamental theme upon which all the variations are composed is the reciprocal term between maternal parallel cousins, and the reciprocal term between paternal parallel cousins. From these two reciprocal relationship terms may be derived the Buryat distinction between maternal and paternal cousin, simply by extending the term for paternal parallel cousin to include paternal cross cousin, and by performing a similar operation in the maternal cousin terms. Again, by holding the parallel cousin terminology constant, and so arranging the cross cousin terms that each is distinct from the other and from the parallel cousin terms as well, we derive the cousin systems of the Kalmuks and the Kazakh-Kirgis. The basic system, that found in Ordos and in Classical Mongol, is chronologically older than any of its typological derivatives; and we thus achieve an insight into the culture history of Inner and Central Asia. Bilateral filiation is a basic conception relative to the avunculate as well, and to all those relationships to the maternal kin sketched in above.

000 M. 182 596 601 T.P. 182 596 601 of adoption, of polygyny, all serve to maintain the line. Let us leave the question of design, of telos, aside. With this type of diachronic orientation[1] is correlated--again the question of cause and effect aside--many intricacies of the kinship terminology. For instance, the son's son is called by the same term as the brother's son: the collateral line is downgraded a generation in this equation. Implied is a reservoir of kin upon whom one may draw to help perpetuate one's line. For brother's son adoption is the most common kind of adoption, and a ready-to-hand relationship exists for continuation of the line should there be no son, or should the son die without male issue.

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000 To the diachronically oriented family is contrasted the synchronically oriented family, found in the patronymic-sib societies. In families of the synchronically oriented type--and in the sibs in which they are found--ancestors are venerated and a few outstanding ones worshipped individually, but for the most part they are not singled out; they are worshipped en masse. In the matter of inheritance, there is no notion of a patrimony being held in trust for the future. While property is not dissipated necessarily, interest and concern in its retention may be imputed to an acquisitive ethos, rather than to the conception of a corporate unit as a trust. The synchronic orientation of the family of this kind fits excellently with the structure of the patronymic-sib, which is a flat

[1] [cf. cat. 116, p. 32 -- Analyst]